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Arabic-Berber-Songhay contact and the grammaticalisation of "thing"

Lameen Souag

The development of double negation in Arabic has attracted increasing attention in recent years (Lucas & Lash 2010; Wilmsen 2014; Diem 2014). The striking parallels between negation in Berber and North African Arabic invite an explanation in contact terms, and such explanations have indeed been proposed (Lucas 2010; Lucas 2013) and disputed (Brugnatelli 2014). However, in addition to serving as a postverbal negative, reflexes of *šay?* have a number of other functions across North African dialects not directly related to negation, notably indefinite quantification and polar question marking. The marking of these functions, too, shows striking Arabic-Berber parallels generally neglected in discussions of the phenomenon, and absent even from Kossmann's (2013) comprehensive overview of contact effects on Berber. Taking these into account produces a more complete picture of Arabic influence on Berber, and provides clues to the relative chronology of the developments in question in both. As in other cases, it appears that Arabic influence on non-Arabic varieties sometimes preserves usages obsolete in present-day regional Arabic dialects.

1. Introduction

Over more than a millennium of intense contact, Berber and Arabic have profoundly influenced one another in North Africa. In some cases, Berber varieties preserve forms and constructions long since abandoned by their present-day Arabic-speaking neighbours (Souag 2009; Souag 2015a). Berber evidence is nevertheless often neglected in attempts to unravel the history of Arabic dialects. In the case of double negation, while many discussions ignore Berber entirely (eg Diem 2014; Wilmsen 2014), the importance of Arabic influence on Berber in the development of double negation has already been highlighted (Lucas 2010:50–64; Lucas 2013). In both Arabic and Berber, in precisely the same contexts, a word originally meaning “thing” has developed into a postverbal negative particle, apparently following the familiar cycle of count noun (/NEG) > emphatic negator (/NEG) > NEG2 (/NEG) > NEG2 outlined by Jespersen (1917); notwithstanding the scepticism of Brugnatelli (2014), this seems unlikely to be coincidental. Contact grammaticalisation of this kind is widely attested worldwide and is reasonably well-understood (Heine & Kuteva 2005); it is driven primarily by the calquing of polyfunctionality.

However, negation is far from being the only function developed by Arabic *šay?* “thing”: as already highlighted by Obler (1990), this morpheme's descendants have a wide variety of functions in Arabic dialects, of which the most widespread besides negation include indefinite quantification and polar interrogation. If the development of “thing” in Berber has been influenced by Arabic, one might expect it to have developed the same functions in Berber as well. This expectation is in fact borne out by the data. However, discussion of the role of contact in grammaticalisation from “thing” in the Arabic and Berber literature focuses almost exclusively on negation. Kossmann (2013:305–306) briefly discusses the possibility of Arabic influence on the development of polar interrogation marking in Berber, but gives little space to the Arabic dialectological evidence for this. In Korandje – a heavily Berber- and Arabic-influenced Northern Songhay variety spoken in the Algerian Sahara – parallel developments are also observable, and have not yet been discussed anywhere. In this paper, evidence will be presented for the claim that the grammaticalisation of “thing” within Arabic has influenced Berber, and thence Northern Songhay, not only in the domain of negation but also in the domains of quantification and interrogation.

2. The pre-contact functions of Arabic *šay?* and Berber **kāra*

Prior to intensive contact between Arabic and Berber, each seems to have developed – presumably independently, or at most mediated by more remote areal factors – a word covering the senses “thing”, “something”, and, under negation, “nothing”. The evidence for this is direct in the case of Arabic, and indirect but strong in the case of Berber.

2.1 Arabic

As Al-Jallad (2014) points out, Arabic *šayʔ* “thing” appears to be historically a deverbal noun from the root *šyʔ* “to want, to will”, attested in earlier Safaitic with the more specific meaning “to experience lack or want”. The implied development of “need” > “thing” precisely parallels the more recent history of widespread dialectal Arabic *ḥājah*. By the beginning of the Islamic era, it had acquired a further function as an indefinite pronoun “anything”; both usages are well-attested in the Qurʾān and would become standard in Classical Arabic:

- (1) *ʔin t-ubd-ū šayʔ-a-n ʔaw t-uxf-ū-hu...*
 if 2impf-reveal-2pl thing-acc-indef or 2impf-conceal-2pl...
 Whether you reveal anything or conceal it... (Qurʾān 33:54)

As such, the indefinite accusative ending allowed it to form adverbial “at all”:

- (2) *fa-l-yawm-a lā t-uḏlam-u naḥs-u-n šayʔ-a-n*
 for-DEF-day-ACC NEG 3FSG.IMPf-wrong.PASS-DECL soul-NOM-INDEF thing-ACC-INDEF
 This day no soul will be wronged in any way / at all (Qurʾān 36:54)

Of course, written sources represent only a small part of the dialectal diversity of early Arabic; it is possible that *šayʔ* had already acquired more functions in some dialects. However, these can at any rate be taken as the minimal set of functions for *šayʔ* when Arabic first came into contact with Berber during the early Islamic era.

2.2 Berber

No relevant documentary evidence on Berber exists for the early Islamic period, so it is necessary to take a more indirect approach to the reconstruction of the functions of **kāra*. This etymon is found everywhere in Berber except in Tuareg, whose *hārāt* “thing, something, a little of” cannot be regularly related to **kāra* despite its obvious phonetic and semantic similarity. The subclassification of Berber remains problematic, but Zenaga (in Mauritania) stands out as a clear outlier (Basset 1952; Kossmann 1999), along with its recently discovered close relative Tetserrét (Lux 2013); only slightly less divergent are the Libyan varieties of Ghadames and Awjila. Moreover, Zenaga and Awjila are both spoken at the extreme peripheries of Berber, making it relatively unlikely that contact should affect them both in identical ways. Zenaga is particularly valuable in that it also shows unusually little Arabic influence. Any function of **kāra* shared by Zenaga with at least one of the Libyan varieties mentioned is thus effectively certain to be proto-Berber. All four of them share the nominal sense “thing” for this etymon (whose various senses will for convenience be glossed below as KRA); this sense may thus be taken as original:

- (3) Zenaga: *tôbbəl tə-skər ... əgəlləjʰ ən əḏ karəh*
 (Mauritania) servant.F 3FSG-make ... many GEN PL KRA
 The maidservant made... many things. (Nicolas 1953:73)
- (4) Tetserrét: *karad wad an tə-gas-ət*
 (Niger) KRA DEM.M CENTRIF 2-find-2SG
 the thing that you have found (Khamed Attayoub 2001:143)
- (5) Ghadames: *i-ssə-mūd kara-y-o*
 (W Libya) 3MSG-CAUS-pray KRA-EP-DEM
 This thing/act makes prayer valid. (Lanfry 1973:159)

- (6) Awjila: *kéra-y-âya ddîwa*
 (E Libya) KRA-EP-DEM what
 What is this thing? (van Putten 2013:263)

At least three out of these four varieties also share the more grammaticalised sense of “something”, or with negation “nothing”, with most of the more central branches of Berber:

“something”:

- (7) Zenaga: *y-ukf-iʔh kārāh*
 3MSG-give-1SG.DAT KRA
 He gave me something. (Taine-Cheikh 2008:299)
- (8) Tetsrerret: *har i-ḍaš karad*
 until 3MSG-touch KRA
 Until he touched something... (Lux 2013:556)
- (9) Ghadames: *awādām i-ttā-thāššām d-i-ftāk kara ḥarmān*
 human 3MSG-IMPf-feel.shame IRR-3MSG-beg KRA deprivation
 A person is ashamed to beg for something out of deprivation (Lanfry 1968:4)

“nothing” (under negation):

- (10) Zenaga: *wār-iʔh y-ukfi kārāh*
 NEG-1SG.DAT 3MSG-give KRA
 He gave me nothing. (Taine-Cheikh 2008:299)
- (11) Tetsrerret: *iwwat ešli ad wur n-ila-t karad*
 one.F womanDEM NEG PTCP-have-3SG.ACC KRA
 a woman who had nothing (Khamed Attayoub 2001:135)
- (12) Awjila: *wur ḡār-i kéra*
 NEG at-1SG KRA
 I have nothing (van Putten 2013:263)

The extension from the noun “thing” to the indefinite pronoun “something/nothing” can thus plausibly be considered to have taken place before the breakup of proto-Berber. These two senses are, in fact, the only ones well-attested in both of the two peripheries, and thus the only ones that can be confidently reconstructed for the proto-Berber stage. While “thing” is commonly expressed in modern northern Berber varieties by Arabic loans, a number of varieties from Tashelhiyt in southern Morocco through to Chaouia in eastern Algeria use the Latin loan **ta-yawsa* < *causa* (Kossmann 2013:71). The grammaticalisation from “thing” to “something” in Berber must therefore have taken place before Latin ceased to be influential in North Africa, and hence most probably before Arabic contact became significant. At the time of first Arabic-Berber contact, the three main senses of Arabic *šayʔ* - “thing”, “something”, and “nothing” - could therefore, at least in some areas, be translated by Berber **kāra* (though the sense “thing” may already have been lost in other areas).

3. From indefinite pronoun to indefinite quantifier

The leap from indefinite pronoun to indefinite quantifier is fairly natural, but by no means inevitable, as attested by its absence in many varieties. It is widely attested in Arabic and extremely widespread in Berber; however, its distribution within Arabic includes dialects that can hardly be taken to have undergone influence from Berber, whereas the reverse is not true.

3.1 Arabic

The earliest examples of the use of *šē/šī* as an indefinite quantifier directly preceding the noun

documented by Diem (2014:103–105) date to the 12th and 13th centuries, eg:

- | | | | | |
|---------------|---|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| (14) Andalusi | <i>lāḥ</i> | <i>l-ak</i> | <i>šī</i> | <i>'imāra</i> |
| | appear.3MSG.PF | to-2SG | thing | sign |
| | There appeared some sign to you (Al-Shushtarī, d. 1269) | | | |

The early examples cited by Diem include Andalusi poetry and Geniza letters, variously probably or certainly from the Maghreb; there are no unambiguously Egyptian examples. All involve inanimates, in both realis and irrealis contexts. The construction continues to be widespread in modern Maghrebi Arabic; it is described in detail for Moroccan Arabic by Caubet (1983). Within the Maghreb, it is best attested in Morocco and western Algeria (Madouni-La Peyre 2003:251), areas where a Berber substrate is prominent. In the eastern Maghreb, it is less widely reported; however, it is attested in Malta, eg *xi mkien* (<x>=š) “somewhere” (Haspelmath & Caruana 1996:215), and even in Benghazi in eastern Libya: *šī yowm* “some day” (Benkato 2014:88). In both the latter regions, Berber substratum influence hardly exceeds a few lexical items.

This use of *šē/šī* is, however, also attested in the Middle East. In Levantine Arabic, the use of *šē/šī* as an indefinite quantifier directly preceding the noun is well-established, and is a well-known feature of the regional koinés. Among more local dialects, it is specifically reported (as *ši*) for Kfar `Abida in northern Lebanon (Feghali 1919:279), (as *šī*) for Damascus (Cowell 1964:467), (as *šē*) for Mharde in east-central Syria (Yoseph 2012:54), (as *šī*) for the central Syrian oasis of Soukhne (Behnstedt 1994:123). It is, moreover, used (as *ši*) in Cypriot Maronite Arabic (Borg 2004:303), whose separation from the rest of Levantine is rather early. Further east, however, this usage is absent; in Iraqi Arabic koine, it is rather the more classical construction *šī min* which is used (Woodhead & Beene 1967:254), while for Mardin, in Turkey just across from northeastern Syria, no such usage of *šī* is reported (Grigoire 2009:241). A similar development with a different word order may be attested in Tillo in southeastern Turkey, as suggested by the following example:

- | | | | | |
|------|---|------------------|------------|----------------|
| (15) | <i>ǧīb=li</i> | <i>kəbrīt šī</i> | <i>mən</i> | <i>qəwnak!</i> |
| | bring=1SG.DAT | match some | from | there |
| | give me some matches over there! (Lahdo 2009:229) | | | |

In south Arabia, *šē/šī* is not attested as an indefinite quantifier. However, it is attested throughout much of the region in a closely related function: as an irrealis existential, typically followed directly by the noun it predicates. For the Hadramawt dialect, Landberg (1901:628) notes that “Il est à remarquer que *شي* n'est ainsi employé [comme “il y a”] qu'après une conjonction et dans une proposition interrogative ou négative” [It is to be noted that *šy* is used in this way (as “there is”) only after a conjunction and in an interrogative or negative proposition]; this use of *šī* is widely attested in Yemen (Behnstedt 1996:690). For Dhofar, likewise, existential *šē* is documented by Davey (2013:170), and the examples given are consistently irrealis. As far north as Al-Baha in the southern Hijaz, *mā š(ī)* is used as the negative existential (Nadwi 1968:138–139). In parts of eastern Oman, we even find this use of *šī* combined with suffixed *šī* negation: *šīši* “there is not” (Brockett 1985:91).

Given the Yemeni and Syrian data, it appears impossible to explain the Arabic development through contact with Berber. Its distribution within North Africa proper – specifically, its concentration in the northwest – is thus to be explained not by the stronger influence of Berber in the northwest, but rather by indefinite quantifier *šī* being a pre-Hilalian archaism within North African Arabic, brought from the east by some of the earliest Arabic-speaking immigrants and later receding under the influence of more recent arrivals using other strategies. Its attestation in Maltese, which has been isolated from other Arabic dialects since before the 11th century arrival of the Banu Hilal, strengthens this interpretation.

3.2 Berber

In Western Berber, the development from indefinite pronoun to indefinite quantifier remains relatively restricted. There, KRA is used only with mass nouns, meaning “some, a little” - followed by a genitive preposition in Zenaga, but a locative one in Tetserrét:

- (16) Zenaga: *kārāʔ-n iʔžž*
 (Mauritania) KRA-GEN milk
 some milk, a little milk (Taine-Cheikh 2008:299)
- (17) Tetserrét: *karad gud tannattan əd təferdi-s*
 (Niger) KRA in honey and wax-3SG.GEN
 some honey and its wax (Khamed Attayoub 2001:137)

On this basis, it might be suggested that KRA was already used as an indefinite quantifier for mass nouns (but not count nouns) in proto-Berber. However, little confidence can be placed in this suggestion. The difference in constructions between Zenaga and Tetserrét suggests independent development (unless, indeed, the Tetserrét construction – taken from an oral commentary on a textbook of Islamic law – is simply a calque from Arabic). That being the case, either or both could equally be recent developments.

In most of Berber, however (including almost all Moroccan and Algerian varieties), KRA is used, followed by a genitive, as an indefinite quantifier for both count and mass nouns, eg:

- (18) Kabyle: *kra n waman / kra n tebratin*
 (Algeria) KRA GEN water.ANN KRA GEN letters.ANN
 some water / some letters¹

This usage is attested relatively early, as in the Zouagha manuscript (from a northwestern Libyan port where Berber is no longer spoken):

- (19) Zouagha: <ʔd wys 'yl' šr' 'nwdrym 'd̄rwsyt>
 (W Libya) əd wis i-la šra ən=wədrim əd̄rus-it
 COP REL.M.SG 3MSG-have KRA GEN=money.ANN few=3MSG
 [A poor man] is he who has some money, (but) little. (Calassanti-Motyliniski 1905:74)

It is even attested (with a count noun) in Awjila:

- (20) Awjila: *u=kan ət-yəlli-m kəra n=əlḥəžət t-šuşm-im ka*
 (E Libya) and=if 2-want-2PL KRA GEN=thing 2-be.quiet-2PL NEG
 And if you pl. want something, don't be quiet. (Souag & van Putten 2015:42)

This suggests a relatively early date for this innovation – at a period after Zenaga and Ghadames had already separated from the mainstream of Berber, but well before the continuity of Berber across North Africa proper was broken up, and hence presumably before the 11th century. This is compatible with an explanation in terms of Arabic influence: we have seen above that the same *terminus ante quem* applies to this development within North African Arabic, and that its distribution makes it unlikely to have spread from Berber to Arabic. Independent development cannot be excluded completely without a *terminus post quem*; however, the northerly distribution of this innovation matches well with the distribution of the greatest levels of Arabic influence within

¹ <http://tatoeba.org/fra/sentences/show/2294432> ; <http://tatoeba.org/fra/sentences/show/2810426> .

Berber.

4. From indefinite pronoun to indefinite adverb

In Classical Arabic, as noted, the adverbial usage of *šayʔ-an* is well-attested. Diem (2014:13–21) gives a close study of its usage in the earliest Classical texts. In this period, it is found sentence-finally with positive declarative clauses in the sense “a bit, somewhat” as well as with interrogatives and negatives in the sense “at all, whatsoever”. The predicate is always gradable. If the verb is transitive, it must have an explicit object, normally definite. Examples (Diem 2014:17–18) include:

- (21) *fa-danaw-tu min-hu šayʔ-a-n*
so-approach-1SG.PF from-3MSG thing-ACC-INDEF
I approached him a bit (*Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal* no. 15339)
- (22) *fa-hal dālika nāfiʔ-u-hā šayʔ-a-n?*
so-Q that.MSG benefit.PTCP-NOM-3FSG thing-ACC-INDEF
Does this profit her a bit? (rather: ...at all?) (*Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal* no. 15358)
- (23) *mā naqam-nā min-hu šayʔ-a-n*
NEG revenge-1PL.PF from-3MSG thing-ACC-INDEF
We took no revenge whatsoever on him (*Šaḥīḥ Muslim* no. 3407)

In positive contexts, this usage was replaced in the post-classical period by reflexes of the diminutive *šuwayʔ* (Diem 2014:64). In negative contexts, it remained in usage much longer, behaving as little more than an emphatic negative particle and tending to cliticize to the verb; eg (Diem 2014:39):

- (24) Andalusī: *la ta-n-qasám-ši*
NEG 2MSG-PASS-divide-thing
you are not divided at all (al-Shushtarī, d. 1269)

This emphatic negative usage is obsolete. By the 17th century, it had already been reduced to an unmarked postverbal negator in Egyptian Arabic (Diem 2014:47–56), and no dialect of which I am aware continues to limit it to emphatic negation: either it marks negation in general, a phenomenon already amply discussed elsewhere, or it has no surviving negative adverbial function (although in some cases a full reflex *ši/šay* may mark emphatic negation in contrast with a coeval reduced reflex *-š*).

In interrogative contexts, however, reflexes of *šayʔ* are quite widely used to mark polar interrogation, including in the Levant, Cairo, Malta, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and (arguably) Yemen (Singer 1958:81–91). Singer derives this function directly from the sense “something”. In Moroccan Arabic, however, polar interrogative *ši* occurs only with gradable predicates (Caubet 1993:II.76), whereas no dialect seems to restrict it to antipassives; it thus appears more probable that this usage derives from the adverbial usage of the indefinite pronoun discussed earlier. In some cases, these reflexes are still straightforwardly adverbial: standalone adverbial reflexes of *šayʔ-a-n* remain in use as polar interrogation markers in Levantine dialects, eg Syrian:

- (25) *tʔūmt-ī ʔəž-ət mən ʕand əl-kawwa ši?*
suit-1SG.POSS come-3FSG.PFV from at DEF-cleaner Q?
Have my suits come back from the cleaners? (Cowell 1964:378)

In North Africa, this usage is still possible in Eastern Libyan Arabic:

- (26) *šif-t* *aḥmad* *amis* *ši*
 see-2MSG.PFV Ahmad yesterday Q
 Did you see Ahmad yesterday? (Owens 1984:102)

However, as in the negative usage, it shows a strong tendency to be reduced to a postverbal clitic; even in Eastern Libyan Arabic, it can also appear as a postverbal clitic *-š*.

5. From indefinite adverb to polar interrogative marker

We have seen that the use of Classical Arabic *šayʔ-a-n* in interrogatives in the sense of “at all, in any way” survives adverbially among Arabic dialects as a polar interrogative marker. This adverb has in turn frequently been reduced to a postverbal clitic, both in Arabic and among the more strongly Arabic-influenced easterly Berber varieties.

5.1 Arabic

In most North African examples, interrogative *šayʔ* appears immediately after the verb, eg:

- (27) Algiers²: <*djaoueb* *chi*>
 jawəb *ši*
 answer.3MSG.PFV Q
 Did he answer? (Delaporte 1845:82)

or:

- (28) Tunis: *t-uqšód=ši* *úlla* *t-ímši*
 2SG.IMPF-stay=Q or 2SG.IMPF=walk
 Will you stay, or leave? (Stumme 1896:143)

It can also directly follow a non-verbal predicator in some contexts, as in:

- (29) Algiers: <*And-ek=chi bezzaf menn-ou?*>
 ʕand-ək=ši bəzzaf mənn-u?
 at-2SG=Q a.lot from-3MSG?
 Do you have a lot of it? (Cotelle 1847:94)

Moroccan Arabic also shows a clause-initial interrogative particle *waš* (Caubet 1993:II.86). This form's precise relationship to interrogative *ši* is debatable; in at least some dialects, it is distinct from *aš* “what?” Wilmsen (2014:97) suggests a derivation from 3msg *huwa* (itself used phrase-initially to mark polar questions in several Arabic dialects) + interrogative *-š*; this is semantically plausible, but the loss of the *h* is difficult to explain.

5.2 Berber

In Berber, similar uses of **ḳāra* are much rarer than in Arabic, but are nevertheless well-attested in a number of varieties, most of them particularly Arabized. The early 19th century Kabyle dialect of Bejaia described by Brosselard et al. (1844) seems systematically to mark polar questions with a morpheme *kra*, a usage unknown in modern Kabyle (note that the town of Bejaia proper was predominantly Arabic-speaking at the time):

² The 19th century usage exemplified in these examples is obsolete in modern Algiers.

(30) Kabyle of Bejaia: <Te-zemmer-eth kra a-yi-t-sahhah-eth ouayi?>
 (Algeria) 2-can.IMPF-2SG KRA IRR-1SG.ACC-2-correct-2SG this.MSG
 Can you correct this for me? (Brosselard 1844:21)

More frequently, we find a polar question marker *š*, optional or restricted to certain contexts, in varieties which also use *š* as NEG2 (cf. briefly Kossmann 2013:306):

(31) Beni Snous: *i-llä-š ġr-es uégrum*
 (W Algeria) 3MSG-be-Q at-3SG bread.ANN
 Do you have any bread? (Destaing 1907:132)

(32) Chaoui of Batna: <adz-i-ouett-ech>
 (E Algeria) *ad-i-wətt-əš*
 IRR-3MSG-hit-Q
 Will he hit? (Torchon 1871:82)

(33) Tamezret: *i-qam-ak-š*
 (S Tunisia) 3MSG-lift-2MSG.ACC-Q
 Has he lifted you up? (Ben Mamou 2005; Kossmann 2013:306)

(34) Zraoua: *t-ufi-š-š háža?*
 (S Tunisia) 2-find.NEGPFV-2SG-Q something
 Did you find anything? (author's field notes)

(35) Sened: *t-esen-et-ch manet i-nr'a ?*
 (Tunisia) 2-know-2SG-Q who 3MSG-kill.PFV
 Do you know who killed him?³ (Provotelle 1911:88)

In Nafusi, this marker alternates with *ši*, indicating an Arabic borrowing:

(36) Fassato Nafusi: *aġr-ék-ši agmâr?*
 (W Libya) at-2MSG-Q horse
 Do you have a horse? (Beguinot 1942:139)

(37) *ad-i-nġû-n-ši?*
 IRR-1SG.ACC-kill-3MPL-Q
 Will they kill me? (Beguinot 1942:113)

In Zuara and Djerba, however, it is *ša*, suggesting Berber origin; it is written as an independent word in available sources, but always seems to appear immediately following the verb:

(38) Zuara: *tə-ssán-əd ša ləmmi mášəy šaləḥ a?*
 (W Libya) 2-know-2SG Q when going Salih Q?
 Do you know when Salih is going? (Mitchell 2009:104)

(39) *yə-lla ša smáʕan g-tiddárt a?*
 3MSG-be Q Sem'an in-house Q?
 Is Sem'an in the house? (Mitchell 2009:97)

³ This example is translated as a positive question, but since Sened allows negation with *-š* alone, its interpretation is potentially ambiguous.

(40) Djerba: *r'er-ouen cha midden eggeth g elh'oumeth enn-ouen?*
 (S Tunisia) at-2MPL Q people many in neighbourhood GEN-2MPL
 Do you have many people in your neighbourhood? (Calassanti-Motyliniski 1897:382)

The distribution of this development strongly suggests that it started in Arabic and proceeded to Berber. In some regions it was calqued from Arabic, in others it was borrowed directly.

The Arabic clause-initial particle *waš* has likewise been borrowed directly into Saharan varieties near the Algerian-Moroccan border such as Figuig and Igli, as observed by Kossmann (2013:305). At first sight, the clause-initial polar interrogative marker *ka* of Senhadja and Ghomara (northern Morocco) might likewise appear to derive from *kra*, as Kossmann suggests, in which case they could have been argued to be partial calques. However, in these languages *ka* also means “if”, from Arabic *kan*; interrogative and conditional *ka* are both non-spirant, while indefinite *kra* has a spirant *k* (Mourigh 2015:269, 347; Evgeniya Gutova p.c.). In neighbouring Tarifit, the clause-initial interrogative is *ma*, whose other senses include “if” (Serhoual 2002:283–285). It thus appears more plausible to interpret *ka* as derived from “if” than from *kra*.

6 Calquing in Korandje

The close-knit Songhay language family developed in the Sahel and is almost entirely spoken there. While Berber and Arabic have had some impact on all Songhay varieties, their influence is profound only in Northern Songhay, and remains relatively minimal in southerly varieties such as Zarma. One variety, however, is spoken far enough north to be located within the Maghreb proper, deeply under the influence of northern Berber and Arabic: Korandje (Souag 2010). For perhaps 800 years, the speakers of Korandje have lived at the small oasis of Tabelbala in southwestern Algeria; for 500 years or more, they were politically subordinate to neighbouring nomadic groups, notably the Arabic-speaking Ghenanma and the Berber-speaking Ait Atta, and their leading families claim Arab or Berber descent (Champault 1969; Souag 2015b). The extensive resulting influence on their language includes partial calquing of the grammaticalisation patterns of “thing”.

6.1 The pre-contact situation

Throughout non-Northern Songhay, reflexes of **hàya* are used in the sense of “thing”:

(41) Gao: *Sorko kul nga bis-ey nda haya hinza*
 Sorko all 3SG pass-3PL with thing three
 All the Sorko surpass them by three things. (Prost 1956:402)

(42) Zarma: *hày-a wò*
 thing-DEF DEM
 this thing (Sibomana 2008:163)

In Korandje this usage is absent, but traces of it survive in other Northern varieties, cf. Tasawaq *hòò-yó* “this thing” (Kossmann 2015:92) and Tadaksahak *h-o* “this (thing)” (Christiansen-Bolli 2011:144). It must therefore be reconstructed for proto-Songhay.

All Songhay varieties, without exception, continue to use **hàya* in the sense of “something”:

(43) Gao: *haya g' a ra*
 thing EXIST 3SG LOC
 There's something in it. (Prost 1956:402)

(44) Zarma: *kande ay se hay hann-o*
 bring 1SG DAT thing good-ADJ
 Bring me something good. (Bernard & White-Kaba 1994:151)

(45) Korandje: *nə-ddzom haya nə-s-ddzom haya?*
 2sg-sow thing 2sg-neg-sow thing?
 Did you sow anything, or did you sow nothing? (Souag 2010:442)

yielding, under negation “nothing”:

(46) Gao: *haya š' a ra*
 thing NEG.EXIST 3SG LOC
 There's nothing in it. (Prost 1956:402)

(47) Zarma: *a si-nda hay fo*
 3SG NEG.EXIST-with thing one
 He has nothing. (Bernard & White-Kaba 1994:151)

(48) Korandje: *a-s-ks=i.s haya*
 3SG-NEG-leave=3PL.DAT anything
 He left them nothing (author's notes).

In many varieties, a slightly more lexical sense “wealth, property” is also attested; it is an open question whether this is original, or derives from “thing”. In either case, Proto-Songhay too seems to have covered the same core senses for **hàya* as Arabic for *šay'* and Berber for **kāra*.

6.2 From indefinite pronoun to indefinite quantifier

Within Songhay, only one language has extended **hàya* to quantifier use: Korandje, as briefly discussed in Souag (2010:231). As a quantifier or as a pronoun, the reflex takes the form *ha* in subject position and *haya* otherwise.

(49) Korandje: *lwərt ha s-ba*
 inheritance any NEG-exist
 There was no inheritance. (author's notes)

ndza man ha ba...
 if fat any exist...
 If there's any fat... (Souag 2010:232)

Comparable Arabic and Berber examples have already been seen above; cp:

(50) Ait Atta: *is t-uf-it ka n usafar?*
 (SE Morocco) Q 2SG-find.PFV-2SG some GEN medicine.ANN?
 Did you find any medicine? (Amaniss 1980:746)

The influence of Arabic and Berber on Korandje is profound, and the distribution of this phenomenon within Songhay makes it impossible to interpret this as anything other than an example of that influence. However, what has been calqued is the colexification (François 2008) of “any” with “anything”, rather than the whole construction. In Korandje *haya* follows what it quantifies, rather than preceding it as in Arabic and Berber. This corresponds to wider syntactic patterns: in Korandje, the specific indefinite article (homophonous with “one”), and lower numerals in general, follow the noun, whereas in Arabic and Berber they precede it.

6.3 From indefinite pronoun to indefinite adverb

In Korandje, **hàya* can be used as an indefinite adverb in negative and interrogative positions:

- (51) Korandje: *a-sə-bya* *haya*
 3SG-NEG-big any
 It's not big at all. (Souag 2010:232)

This usage is infrequent in Korandje, and unattested anywhere else in Songhay. However, it does seem to be attested for Andalusí Arabic, and corresponds perfectly to what Jespersen's cycle would lead us to predict for the earlier stages of development in both Arabic and Berber.

Korandje has also borrowed the polar interrogative particle *waš* from western Maghrebi Arabic, but in this case there is no question of calquing.

7 Conclusion

Prior to mutual contact, Arabic, Berber, and Songhay all shared the colexification of the noun “thing” and the indefinite pronoun “something, anything, nothing”; only Arabic, however, additionally colexified this with an adverbial “at all”. From the indefinite pronoun, many westerly Arabic dialects developed an indefinite quantifier “some, any”; from the adverbial, it developed an emphatic negative marker and a polar question marker, both of which tended to become postverbal clitics (ultimately leading to the much-discussed postverbal negative marker). Under longstanding Arabic influence, some Berber varieties copied all of these developments. Korandje, under heavy influence from first Berber and later Arabic as well, copied the first two, both of which are attested in nearby Atlas Tamazight. Korandje, moreover, preserves a usage obsolete in modern North African Arabic, but already inferred from our knowledge of Jespersen's cycle: the use of “thing” as an emphatic negative marker.

List of abbreviations

ACC accusative
ADJ adjective
ANN annexed state
CENTRIF centrifugal
COP copula
DAT dative
DEF definite
DEM demonstrative
EP epenthetic
EXS existential
F feminine
GEN genitive
INDF indefinite
IPFV imperfective
IRR irrealis
LOC locative
M masculine
NEG negation
NOM nominative
PASS passive

PFV perfective
PL plural
PTCP participle
Q question marker
SG singular

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